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AUTHOR Pazey, Barbara
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ABSTRACT

Special education is experiencing the effects of educational reform. Examples include rethinking of service delivery, collaborative versus authoritarian leadership, teambuilding and inclusionary practices replace exclusionary practices, and diversity issues. These changes are creating ethical and moral dilemmas for school administrators. In forming moral judgements, two voices are distinguishable: the voice of care, connection, protection from harm, and response; and the voice of justice, equality, reciprocity, and rights. Women tend to choose a care orientation while men tend to choose a justice orientation. The competence of caring and intuition has just as much importance as that of justice, and needs to be assimilated into the leadership and organizational theories for educational administration. This approach can be applied to special education service delivery and administrative practice through consideration of such issues as placement of minority students, services to individuals with disabilities as well as their caregivers, shared educational responsibility, participatory opportunities for parents, and the impact of Outcome Based Education. (Contains 35 references.) (JDD)

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The Missing Link for the Administration of Special Education: The Ethic of Care

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Barbara Pazey

University of Texas at Austin

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Introduction

Interest in the representation of women in educational administration has increased over the last two decades. Until recently, however, little research has been done on women in positions of formal educational leadership. Most of the traditional literature on school administration and organizational behavior ignores women. Instead, it has shaped "reality through a male lens" (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 325). Leadership theories have been conceptualized from an historical organization of schools as hierarchies, and the legitimate authority of the male administrator (Blackmore, 1989). Sergiovanni (1992) refers to the supremacy of this literature as management values of secular authority, science, and deductive logic. These three values express faith in the bureaucratic system, findings of empirical research, and deductive reasoning.

Feminist theorists and educational researchers question the masculine model of leadership and organizational theory (Astin & Leland, 1991; Blackmore, 1989; Glazer, 1991; Helgersen, 1990; & Shakeshaft, 1987). According to Blackmore,

> A particular view of leadership premised upon liberal theories of abstract individualism and bureaucratic rationality, and supported by positivistic theories of knowledge which privilege universal laws of administration and human behavior, has become dominant in educational administration. The universal individual central to this perspective of leadership is modelled upon men's experience. Hierarchical relationships are considered to be the 'givens' of 'rational' organizational life. Leaders display attributes and behaviors, possess

> moral virtues and principles, which are generally associated with 'masculinity'. It is a view which has effectively displaced women in educational thought, and therefore rendered women invisible in administrative practice. (1989, p.94)

Shakeshaft (1987) argues that administrative theory needs to be challenged and reconceptualized to include research information about ways women lead.

Books on leadership have become commonplace in the organizational marketplace over the last ten years. Peters and Waterman's (1982) In Search of Excellence, is referenced in nearly every discussion of business and school improvement. In addition, an emphasis on Total Quality Management and corporate restructuring is generating a new wave of organizational terminology. In The Fifth Discipline, Senge (1990) describes a core of disciplines that support empowerment and creativity, and create a "learning organization." Workforce 2000 discusses the need to respond to the changing values of a diverse workforce (Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991). Respect for individuality, relationships, family, personal and professional development, and moral and ethical principles is emphasized. Strategies for achieving a competitive advantage by capitalizing on the strengths of a diverse workforce and multidisciplinary teams are prescribed in Team Players and Teamwork (Parker, 1990).

As a result, the voice of business has influenced efforts toward educational reform. Challenges for School Leaders (American Association of School Administrators, 1988) addresses leadership issues

in the educational field and compares them to recommendations that have been developed by corporate America. Teacher empowerment, professionalism of teaching, and restructuring the organizational and administrative aspects of schools are a few suggestions.

Indeed, reform is being discussed broadly in education. But also in more narrow speciality areas. For example, special education is experiencing the effects of educational reform. Questions of how service delivery for individuals with disabilities can best be implemented are forcing special education educators and administrators to rethink best practices issues. New perspectives of special education leadership are calling for collaborative rather than authoritarian behaviors. Teambuilding and inclusionary practices are replacing the division of regular and special education personnel and exclusionary practices of the past. The increased representation of cultural and linguistic minorities in special education are causing diversity issues to gain more importance. The recent passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 1990) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) are creating ethical and moral dilemmas for school administrators.

The purpose of this paper is to address three questions: 1) Do feminist perspectives and behaviors provide an alternative, conceptual model for leadership? 2) If so, can they enhance the emerging trends for educational leaders and educational organizations?

3) Can feminist principles for administrative practice impact service delivery for individuals with disabilities? These questions will be examined through a review and analysis of literature regarding feminist perspectives, gender, leadership style, and educational administration. Literature that discusses the need to consider educational administration and school governance from a moral perspective will also be presented. These "non-traditional" leadership practices will be applied to administration and the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities.

Feminist Perspectives

Kanter (1975) refers to a "masculine" model of organizations, linking masculine managerial traits to analysis, planning, and emotional detachment in performing tasks. In their discussion of previous research on gender stereotypes, Eagly, Karau, and Johnson (1992) describe stereotypic beliefs for men as "aggressive, independent, self-sufficient, forceful, and dominant" (p. 79). Women are perceived as "more kind, helpful, understanding, warm, sympathetic, and aware of others' feelings" (p. 79). These two orientations are commonly labeled as "masculine" and "feminine." Assignment of labels, however, is not meant to reify or standardize behaviors, but to differentiate between two different gender role orientations and two different administrative styles.

Recent studies of moral orientations of females provide a useful perspective for exploring these gender differences. Gilligan (1982)

studied the conceptions of self, morality, and experiences of conflict and choice for three groups of women. These females exhibited a strong tendency toward relationships, caring, cooperation, and empathy. In solving moral dilemmas, they reconstructed the problem in terms of relationships rather than a system of rules. Solutions that included everyone's needs were sought. Hierarchical structures were replaced by webs of inclusion.

According to Gilligan (1982, 1988) and Lyons (1988), when forming moral judgments, two voices are distinguishable: 1) the voice of care, connection, protection from harm, and response, and 2) the voice of justice, equality, reciprocity, and rights. The value of care views the self and other as interdependent. The value of justice and autonomy sees the "individual as separate and of relationships as either hierarchical or contractual (Gilligan, 1988, p. 8).

Due to a lack of consistent findings, neither "voice" can be attributed, exclusively, to men or women although women tend to choose a care-orientation while men tend to choose a justice orientation. For example, in an analysis of the orientations of justice or care in resolving moral problems, Gilligan (1988) found that care and connection were predominant in women's thinking. Care-focus preferences occurred more frequently among women, and Justice-focus orientations were more frequent among men (Gilligan and Atanucci, 1988). However, gender-related differences were not absolute. Men and

women's moral orientations considered justice and care (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988) and rights and justice (Lyons, 1988).

Noddings (1984) associates the voice of caring with a feminine approach that is grounded in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness. It originates from a moral attitude rather than moral reasoning. According to Noddings (1984), women ask for more information when faced with a moral dilemma. Their rationale is often based on "feelings, needs, impressions, and a sense of personal ideal rather than to universal principles and their application" (Noddings, 1984, p.3). Because caring is viewed as a relational ethic existing between the "one-caring" and the one"cared-for", an interdependency is formed between the two parties. The effectiveness and fulfillment of the "one-caring" depends on how the "cared-for" receives and responds.

Women's Way of Knowing, a study of women's cognitive development, discusses how women reach conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority. Common to all women in describing their intellectual and ethical development was the issue of "gaining a voice" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986, p.16). To gain a sense of voice was metaphorically linked with a powerful mind and self. Belenky et al. (1986) postulated a hierarchy of five cognitive stages for gaining a voice: a) silence, in which women have no voice and little control over their lives; b) received knowledge, in which sources of truth come from authority, not themselves; c) subjective knowledge, in which women turn away from others to trust in their own intuition and

personal experience; d) procedural knowledge, in which women apply objective procedures for acquiring and communicating knowledge; and e) constructive knowledge, in which women integrate the voice of reason and intuition, view knowledge as contextual, and recognize the value of both objective and subjective knowing.

Astin and Leland (1991) interviewed women in education who had been instrumentally involved in the social change of the women's movement. The conceptual model of leadership assumed that leadership evinces itself through actions "to bring about change in an organization, an institution, or the social system" (p. 116). Strong values and "a passion for justice and social change" (Astin & Leland, 1991, p. 66) were identified. Leadership was a process of empowering members of a group to work together toward a common goal to "create change, transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life" (p. 8). Many of these women had a family background that emphasized human rights and social activism, or had experienced discrimination in their formative years. This instilled a "sense of mission or caring and the desire to make a difference" (p.81). Critical elements of leadership gleaned from these women include "values that address change, the energy of personal motivation and involvement...and the capacity to look up from oneself and out to a society and the future" (p. 83).

These feminist perspectives have great potential for future administrative practice. The competence of caring and intuition has just as much importance as that of justice, and needs to be assimilated

into the leadership and organizational theories for educational administration. As stated by Desjardins (1989),

> There is a kind of death for society in general when the care perspective is not recognized as essential to bringing wholeness to the justice perspective. Everyone loses when the care perspective is not part of the workplace, part of institutions, part of both personal and professional relationships, and part of the efforts toward world understanding and peace. Education is the key to developing the two distinct moral voices in both sexes, to allowing the full use of these voices by both sexes, and to more accurately and fully mapping human growth and development. Since the educational system has been build primarily on knowledge of men's development, men's development must now be rethought in terms of its interaction with and relationship to women's development. (p. 140)

Glazer (1991) contends that feminist perspectives, when applied to educational administration and teaching, are "embodied in emancipatory approaches that emerge from women's experience and articulate women's beliefs, values, and attitudes" (p.330). According to Glazer (1991), the first step in transforming education is to change the lens in how the educational administration profession is studied. She argues for an "alliance between feminism and professionalism, restructuring the public and private spheres of human existence to be more responsive to women's concerns and to build nonbureaucratic, nonhierarchical systems" (p. 338).

Gender and Leadership Styles

Despite the interest in gender and leadership orientations, few empirical studies have been conducted. Most of the literature on women in administration has been a synthesis of previous studies; surveys, interviews, and observations; and/or personal experience. The

research findings have been contradictory and have caused a divergence of opinions. A discussion of research on female leadership styles, therefore, cannot be generalized to all female leadership behaviors. The purpose of this section is to provide a synthesis of the findings concerning women leaders and administrators.

Based on her findings of female task-related behaviors in schools, Shakeshaft (1987) speculated on administrative practice in a "female culture and experience" (p.201). In such an environment, the following would most likely exist: a) a value-driven emphasis on relationships and caring; b) a focus on the student, teaching, and learning; c) a less dominant style of authority; d) community building through inclusive, participative approaches; and e) boundary-blurring distinctions between personal and organizational spheres.

In a review and synthesis of research comparing leadership styles of female and male principals (Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992), female principals were more democratic than autocratic. They treated teachers and other workers as colleagues or equals. Female principals were both task-oriented, focusing on the organization of school activities, and interpersonally-oriented.

Using Women's Ways of Knowing as their theoretical base, an exploratory study (Haring-Hidore, Freeman, Phelps, Spann, & Wooten, 1990) which related the "ways of knowing," decision-making, and leadership styles of six female, higher education administrators was conducted. Each of the participants used a collaborative style of

leadership, and were well-informed through multiple sources of reading and communication. They considered relationships important in making decisions and leading, and "voiced standards, principles, and underlying moral beliefs about working with people" (p. 179).

To gain an understanding of women's values and strengths of leadership in the public sector, Helgesen (1990) studied four American women from varying businesses. Their long-term thinking stemmed from a societal perspective. Decisions were related to their effect on family, education, the environment, and the world. Feminine principles were expressed through caring, cooperation, relationships, and intuition. Through these practices, creativity and innovation were fostered. Organizational structures were based on interrelationships and connections. A web of inclusion enabled them to access information from all sources, test decisions through input from others, work through conflicts, and weave a fabric of trust and potential with those around them. Voice was preferred over vision. Through recognition of individuals' beliefs and ideas, others were able to gain their voice as well. By empowering others and embracing relationships rather than competition, these women found they were able to strengthen themselves.

Astin and Leland (1991) found common skills among women who instigated change. They were inventive, took risks, and were politically astute. Furthermore, they formed networks with others, surrounded themselves with talented people, and engaged in a collective effort to

effect change. Orchestration of collaborative efforts was compared to "a theatrical performance" (p.114). Communication, listening to and empowering others, and strong interpersonal skills were highly valued. A collaborative, collegial leadership style emphasized reaching consensus. Finally, these women stressed the need to be prepared, knowledgeable, and adept at finding and using resources.

A study of successful women executives concluded that the organizational context influenced leadership style (Rosener, 1990). The nontraditional, interactive leadership style used by women was conducive to fast-changing environments that create havoc in the organization. Receptivity to new solutions, structures, and ways of leading was more likely to occur. Because of a high proportion of new and young workers, "inclusive and open" leadership styles that "enhance the self-worth of others, and who create a fun work environment" (p. 125) fostered cooperation and trust between workers and the leader. Interactive leadership was not linked solely to females. It was recognized as an alternative style, flexible enough to survive in a competitive and diverse environment.

Reconceptualizing Educational Administration and School Organizations

Recent efforts toward site-based management and teacher empowerment stress the importance of school governance. Due to a change in societal factors and values, administrators now face ethical dilemmas concerning the treatment of individuals and specific situations. Decisions, made within the context of the educational

environment, involve consideration of the following: linguistic minorities; youth and adult population shifts; socioeconomic status; environmental factors of illiteracy, crime, substance abuse, and communicable diseases; and financial issues. To effectively deal with the complexity and diversity of changes occurring in the schools of today, the motivating forces of school organization need to be critically examined.

Foster (1986) contends that administrative theory must be located "within a larger embracive theory of schools in society" (p. 21), and dependent on the educative nature of the school. According to Starratt (1991), the moral purposes of the educational organization is to nurture and care for the "human, social, and intellectual growth of the youngsters....educational administrators have a moral responsibility to be proactive about creating an ethical environment for the conduct of education" (p. 187).

These proposed purposes for educational administration are framed within an ethic of justice and fairness. Starratt (1991), however, suggests that an ethic of justice should be complemented by an ethic of caring, which "postulates a level of caring that honors the dignity of each person and desires to see the person enjoy a fully human life" (p. 195). Justice and care are interdependent and "enrich each other in a more complete ethic" (p.198). Educational administration becomes a moral science (Foster, 1986) in which "each administrative decision

carries with it a restructuring of a human life; this is why administration at its heart is the resolution of moral dilemmas" (p.33).

Senge's (1990) discussion of core disciplines to build a "learning organization" closely parallels the "interactional, feminist" ethic of care and compassion, and the constructivist "way of knowing." "Personal mastery" involves the integration of reason and intuition; a recognition of interdependencies and relationships; a compassionate awareness of others; and a commitment to a larger purpose. The individual challenges and/or changes his/her "mental models" and actions through skills of reflection and inquiry, a self analysis of thinking processes, and interactions with others. "Shared vision" creates "a sense of commonality" and "gives coherence to diverse activities" (Senge, 1990, p. 206). Its power is derived from "a common caring" (p. 206). Team learning occurs through a combination of discussion and dialogue. In dialogue, assumptions are suspended, individuals are viewed as colleagues, and complex issues are investigated from different viewpoints to discover new or alternative views. When agreement or decisions need to be reached, the team engages in discussion. By practicing dialogue and discussion, team members develop a deeper level among each other.

Application to Special Education Service Delivery and Administrative Practice

In the context of special education, service delivery mechanisms within the educational enterprise are becoming more difficult and

complex to administer. Administrative practice involves a continuum of concerns, including federal and state legislation, increased demands for accountability, diminishing resources for education, and an increasing number of culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Yates (1991) suggests that, due to the discrepancy between emerging populations and institutional norms of regular education, there will be a greater tendency for the educational system to "dump" children who "don't fit" into special education. Furthermore, the emphases on life-long learning, learning organizations, and recent passage of ADA poses greater complexities for service delivery in higher education institutions and the workforce. Clearly, the traditional models of organization and leadership are no longer adequate for dealing with such issues.

Administrative practice must seriously consider the moral and ethical dilemmas inherent in serving individuals with disabilities. A barrage of questions surfaces when considering special populations: What arrangements will be most responsive to the human and social rights of all individuals? Who will have a voice in evaluating or altering these arrangements? How will everyone's interests be accommodated? What methods of measurement will be used to determine if specific outcomes were achieved? How can the regular education/ public sector meet the social, cultural, and educative needs of special needs individuals? These and other probing questions might best be

served by incorporating a relational ethic of caring into administration.

The administrative skills involved in a caring ethic are related to interpersonal reasoning (Noddings, 1991), "the capacity of moral agents to talk appreciatively with each other regardless of fundamental differences" (p.157). In order to respond to others' needs, both parties enter into dialogue. Flexibility is a major component, allowing the revision of goals as the dialogue evolves. Reasoning methods are characterized by efforts to cultivate a relation and search for an appropriate response. Within this context, individuals with disabilities are not seen as the only persons in need of care. The caregivers for these individuals (parents, teachers, extended family members, peers, etc.) are also served. When a relationship of trust is established, better decisions that are tailored to everyone's needs are reached.

An important responsibility of the administrator is to assure that minority students are appropriately referred and placed in special education programs. To assist in guarding against inappropriate referrals and discriminatory practices, Garcia & Ortiz (1988) recommend a prereferral process which employs Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT). TATs solicit the expertise and input of regular education personnel and utilize this information as an integral parts of the prereferral process. Using a team process, "a collaborative learning community is established" (Garcia & Ortiz, 1988, p. 11). Special educators and diagnosticians are not allowed to dominate the decision-making

process for placing students into special education programs. The administrator facilitates discussion among regular education team members, gives strength to individual voices, and fosters a greater receptivity and responsiveness toward students needing additional assistance in the classroom.

Sailor (1991) proposes the need to consider a "shared educational agenda" (p.8) due to a tendency toward integrating students with severe and low-incidence disabilities into the regular classroom. These practices involve a reconfiguration of available resources as well as a requirement to reconceptualize how special education is organized and administered. Philosophical issues concerned with mainstreaming, tracking, ability grouping, and student self-esteem prevent the administrator from acting through a rational decision-making process. When assessing the situation, a "constructivist" method of knowing is best employed.

Parents of children with disabilities should be educated about their rights to participate in the decision-making process of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and be given a voice to participate in this process. Harry (1992) challenges professionals to question their motives for providing participatory opportunities to parents. Administrators who are led by ethics of care and justice will successfully integrate a relational, democratic, and equitable posture towards dialogue and parental representation.

Early intervention and vocational preparation during late elementary and progressing through middle and secondary school is important (Meers, 1992). Postsecondary and/or community support to facilitate successful training and entry into the workplace for individuals with disabilities is gaining greater attention since the passage of ADA. In a nationwide study of secondary vocational educators, however, approximately two-thirds (63.9%) had not been involved in the preparation of the IEP (Rojewski, Pollard, & Meers, 1992). Such omissions require administrative intervention. Leaders who form webs of inclusion and promote collaborative input from the varying constituencies of the educational process can guarantee that the best interest of the student are served, and all parties are benefited.

The trend towards Outcome Based Education (OBE) in school restructuring efforts has serious implications for administrative practice concerning students with disabilities. Ysseldyke, Thurlow, and Shriner (1992) state, "national attention to standards and outcomes is currently moving *away from* the established system of special education. Moreover, there is no indication that much serious attention is being given to how such proposals and initiatives affect students with disabilities" (p.40). Administrators are admonished to be actively involved in collaborative efforts toward school reform. By staying well-informed and using multiple sources of knowledge through reading and

communication, they can work through conflicts and voice certain underlying principles and standards for relating to all students.

Societal values can also be affected by administrators who are interested in effecting social change and improving educational and occupational opportunities for the disabled. Leadership styles which are committed to empowering individuals to work together toward a common cause and improving the quality of human life, are fundamentally important. If administrators hope to instigate change, they must be willing to engage in inventive, creative, and collaborative behaviors. Networking with other administrators who espouse respect for diversity and equal treatment of individuals should replace individualistic approaches to management.

Implications for Future Research

In the conclusion of In a Different Voice, Gilligan (1982) calls for the need to hear women's voices as a part of recognizing truth. She contends that through an analysis of the tension between responsibility and rights, and a dialogue between justice and care, the integrity of both voices in human development is appreciated. Both voices are powerful forces for educational administration and overseeing service delivery for the disabled. Service, in itself, implies a combination of care and justice role orientations.

Further studies on leadership styles that challenge traditional organizational theory are suggested. Marshall's (1992) research on "atypical" administrators revealed values that "lead administrators to

alleviate inequities, help children, and support teachers" (p.382). It appears that leadership and values are inextricably engaged. In light of the ethical dilemmas that administrators must face daily, the administrator who utilizes multiple perspectives of leadership may be better equipped to handle the ambiguity and unpredictable nature of his/her field. A marriage of the care and justice ethic is just a beginning. According to Foster (1989),

> Leadership, in the final analysis, is the ability of humans to relate deeply to each other in the search for a more perfect union. Leadership is a consensual task, a sharing of ideas and a sharing of responsibilities, where a 'leader' is a leader for the moment only, where the leadership exerted must be validated by the consent of followers, and where leadership lies in the struggles of a community to find meaning for itself. (p.61)

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